Translation of the Friday Sermon of 15th July 1983 Delivered by Hazrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad – Khalifatul Masih IV

Verily man is born anxious and miserly.
When misfortune touches him he is fretful.
But when good fortune comes to him he is niggardly.
Excepting those who pray.
Who are constant in their Prayers.
Those in whose wealth there is an allotted share.
For the beggar and the destitute who begs not.
Those who believe the Day of Judgement to be a reality.
Those who are fearing of the wrath of their Lord.
Verily the wrath of their Lord is unsparing.

The Holy Quran. Al Maarij [The Spiral Staircase]: 20 -29.

The Holy Quran's ways of admonishing are unique and very dear. Every aspect of human nature, attention to which can be helpful in the reform of man, has been stressed in *The Holy Quran*. It draws attention to the finer aspects of human nature, reminds man of his reality and lack of merit and then opens new avenues of hope for him and saves him from despair. God reveals that His admonition is not designed to cause one to despair or to confront one with failure or frustration, but is intended to make one aware of the reality, to help in standing firmly on truth and to teach the way of eternal salvation. He informs us of that which should be avoided and the ways of avoiding it and the ways of achieving eternal success.

Of the verses that I have just recited, the first two sound terrifying. The reader feels as if he is being reminded that in reality he is worthless. His nature is afflicted with certain weaknesses and ills and yet he indulges in boasts and imagines that by relying upon himself alone he can achieve success. He is warned against indulging in such fancies. He is reminded that by nature he is impatient, weak-hearted and lacks fortitude. When he encounters ills, he is full of lamentations and gives way to despair. He feels that he can never emerge from this darkness. But when he experiences some good, he becomes tight-fisted and selfish and does not think of sharing his prosperity with others.

This contrast is worth reflecting upon. Why is it that a person who has experienced hardship becomes selfish when he encounters prosperity, instead of sharing it with others, and does not care for his fellow men? *The Holy Quran* points out that this is the natural condition of those who have not been trained in the values of religion. But Allah comes to their aid and saves them from despondency by pointing out that those who have recourse to worship are safeguarded against this natural tendency. Their natures are modified and they are safeguarded against evil. When they encounter trouble, they do not yield to it and indulge in complaints. They are endowed with steadfastness. When they experience good, they think of their fellow beings who are afflicted with ills and miseries. They come to the aid of their less

fortunate brothers and sisters and set aside a definite portion of their own wealth and resources for the help of the less fortunate, those who draw attention to their needs and ask to be relieved of their distress as well as those who refrain from asking, despite their distress.

This quality of sympathy for fellow beings is the fruit of worship, of such worship as is constant and is persisted in and is not merely casual. It is such people who do not despair under affliction nor lament and are steadfast. When they experience some good, they do not appropriate it wholly for themselves but share it with those who are less fortunate.

We have just experienced the good fortune of enjoying the delights of the blessed month of Ramadan. During this month many of those who did not worship before began to perform worship. Those who used to lead a life of comfort and luxury gained the experience of difficulties which they bore for the sake of Allah in the month of Ramadan so that they realized what difficulties and afflictions mean. But this experience of theirs was their choice which they adopted for the winning of Allah's pleasure. The month of Ramadan was a good opportunity for the training and improvement of their selves. For a whole month, they performed the obligatory Prayers with care and attention. Their training in this respect continued through a whole month and should prove effective. It is only those who have developed those qualities which have been inculcated in these verses of *The Holy Quran* that have emerged successfully from the month of Ramadan.

These verses furnish a beautiful measure and criterion for determining what a person has gained in this blessed month and what they have lost. If after the passing of Ramadan a person has become constant in worship, if they have learnt fortitude and steadfastness during periods of distress, if they have become immune to despair, if they have developed greater sympathy with their fellow-beings, then let them rejoice that these verses of *The Holy Quran* convey to them the good news of permanent success.

One who has passed through Ramadan without acquiring and developing these qualities, should carry out a process of self-examination and should determine upon carrying out self-improvement and self-reform. Everyone should themselves carry out such self-examination. No one has the right to admonish others that they have passed through Ramadan without any gain. Such admonition would prove harmful both to the one who admonishes and to the one who is admonished. The one who makes such admonition would be in danger of becoming arrogant and the one who is admonished would feel that he is being rebuked and he might be afflicted with greater neglect. At this stage, everyone should carry out deep self-examination.

It may be asked how Prayer helps develop the qualities which are apparently opposed to one’s nature. This is an evolutionary process with which human nature is invested by Allah.

This is not a mere claim. This is a deep reality and is a firm philosophy. A person who is devoted to the worship of God is afflicted with distress has one recourse open that is the supplications. Even realising that one is completely helpless and weak and without any resource and knowing that the affliction from which one is suffering is beyond the healing skills of all the physicians in the world, yet one believes that God has absolute power, that He hears the Prayers, and that He can convert the impossible into the possible and the feasible. Such a person can never give way to despair. A people who have perfect faith in Prayer can

never despair and who realise that through Prayer and worship a communion is established between them and the All-Powerful; Who can make easy all that is difficult and Who can convert every distress into comfort.

A believer never laments inasmuch as through worship a bond is established with the gracious Lord and this relationship bestows the love of God and the quality of being reconciled to the will and pleasure of God. Thus worship brings a message of multiple mercy for a believer. When a believer supplicates to God, begging that the difficulties may be removed and that the distress may be eased. It affirms that God is Lord and Master and that they are His servant and creation. If He grants that which is supplicated for, they would be happy and if the supplication is rejected they would still be pleased with Him.

The truth is that humankind has no resource except Prayer. A supplicant must reconcile themselves in all conditions and situations to the will and pleasure of their Lord and persist in humble approach to Him, but the one indispensible condition is that worship should be continuous and should not be neglected at any time. This is also stressed in: *Who diligently guard the observance of their prayers*.[1] The believers have been taught that if they desire prosperity, they should safeguard their worship, that if they desire peace and security they should be constant in their worship, that if they desire to be protected against heavenly occurrences and afflictions, they should perform their worship in such manner that it should become their protector.

One natural consequence of worship is that a true worshipper bestows of their wealth upon those who ask and those who do not. They supplicate God for His favour, but do not give anything to others, they disentitles themselves to God's favour. One who is miserly towards others cannot hope to be a recipient of God's bounty. Thus those who are endowed with wisdom prepare their minds in advance before they supplicate God. They affirm that whatever they are bestowed they would share it with God's creation. Thus their supplications have this aspect also that they wish to be the means of spreading among others that which God bestows upon them.

The Prophets are invested with this quality in perfection. The Promised Messiah, peace be on him, was shown in a vision a loaf of bread descending from heaven and he was told that it was meant for him and for his companion-dervishes. He was not told that he should share it with his dervishes. God affirmed that He knew him well, that he would not confine God's favours to himself and that whatever he is bestowed, he distributes among others. That is

[1] *The Holy Quran*. Al Muminun [The Faithful]: 10.

why God said: *This is for you and for your companion-dervishes*.[2]

Thus it is worship that teaches that a person should share their good fortune with others and should derive pleasure from doing so. I, therefore, hope that this month of Ramadan which taught some people to start worship and enabled those who were already accustomed to His worship to become more devout, would leave this perpetual lesson for us that we shall continue firmly based on the certainty that there is no life for us without worship and that there is no guarantee of our being safeguarded against distress except through worship, that without worship we cannot become such creatures of God as have been created for the benefit of the whole of mankind. Also as is mentioned in these verses, we cannot become secure against heavenly torments except through worship. Therefore, make effective this lesson in your lives and make it the rule of your conduct and then see how boundless and limitless the grace of God Almighty is.

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[2] In a dream I saw an angel seated on an elevated platform in the guise of a boy. In his hand he was holding a pure loaf of bread, which was very bright.[*] He gave it to me and said: [Urdu] **This is for you and for the dervishes who are with you**. I saw this dream at a time when I was not at all known nor had I put forth any claim nor was there any group of dervishes with me. But now I have a large Jama'at of people who have voluntarily chosen to put their faith above the world and have thus reduced themselves to the position of dervishes. Having migrated from their homes and having separated themselves from their relatives and friends, they have taken up permanent abode near me.

I had interpreted the loaf of bread as meaning that God Himself will provide for me and for my followers and that we will not be rendered anxious on account of lack of provision.

This has been the case over a long number of years.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad – The Promised Messiah & Mahdi. *Nuzul al-Masih*. (Zia al-Islam, 1902). *Ruhani Khazain: viii*. 584, 585.

[*] And was very big, equal to about four normal loafs.

Ahmad. *Haqiqatul Wahi* [*The Philosophy of Divine Revelation*]. (Magazine Press, 1907). *R. K: xxii*. 290. English: (Islam International Publications Ltd, 2018). 353.